

51
A
SERMON

PREACH'D

At the Funeral of the Right Hon^{ble}
The Lady MARY,

Daughter to *Ferdinando* late Earl of *Huntingdon*,

AND

Wife to WILLIAM JOLIFE of *Caverswell*-
Castle in the County of *Stafford*, Esq;

At *Ashby-De-la-Zouch*, Decemb. xii. 1678.

By SAMUEL WILLES, M. A. and
Preacher at *All-hallows* in *Derby*.

IMPRIMATUR.

April 12.
1679.

Guil. Sill.

LONDON, Printed by J. D. for John Baker, at the three
Pigeons in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1679.

SERMON

At the Anniversary of the Birth
of the Lady MARY

Daughter to George, the Earl of Kent
Wife to WILLIAM, Lord of the
Castle in the County of Kent

At the Chapel of St. Dunstons
By SAMUEL JOHNSON, M.A.
Fellow of the Royal Society

London: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall
1741

To the Right Hon^{ble}

THEOPHILUS

Earl of Huntingdon.

My LORD,

HAD Your Lordship commanded to this performance a Person of Sufficiencies, in any tolerable measure, suitable to the occasion of it, You had found your self better served. And more right had been done to the Memory of your Noble Sister, than the following poor Accounts of her can amount unto; which have nothing to commend them, but that (as far as they reach) they are true. Nor can I suffer imputation from any that knew this Excellent Lady, in any degree of intimacy, but only in having spoken so extreme defectively, and in so mean terms, concerning her. And yet, perhaps, I have said enough to provoke the Envy of some others, who love not to hear of any Commendations but what are ascribed to themselves. To whom I shall only suggest a return of Dr. Donne's upon a not much different occasion, Let any Lady make her self fit for those Praises, and they shall be hers.

Donne's E.
first p. 253.

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And

The Epistle Dedicatory.

And I heartily wish I had been able so to have represented this Illustrious Example (for it needed no Ornament but bare Narration) as to excite in others a vertuous Emulation. But I am sensible how short I have fallen of the Dignity of my Subject. And had not your Lordship's very great and very just Affection to this Incomparable Lady somewhat imposed upon your Accurate Judgment, your Lordship would never have sent this Sermon to the Press. But though it must abide (as far better things daily do) all license of censure; yet if any thing therein shall in the least assist any good Soul in true Devotion, I shall esteem the Publication abundantly recompensed to,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble

and most obedient Servant,

Samuel Willes.

DERBY,

Apr 6.

1679.

S. LUKE XX. 36.

Neither can they die any more ; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection.

THESE are our Saviour's words, in answer to the *Jewish* Atheists, the *Saducees*, who (among their other Errors) deni'd there was any Resurrection of the Dead. These Men put a Case to our Saviour ; with a captious and malicious purpose, to ensnare him in such Absurdities, as they vainly conceiv'd his Answer would betray him to. The Case was this : A Woman in the course of her life had seven Husbands successively, and survived them all. Now (supposing a Resurrection of the Dead) to which of the seven shall this Woman appertain, when she and they rise again ? For she was not more one Man's Wife, than she was another's : all must have her then, or none. This was their Question : to which our Lord makes this return, That the Woman at the Resurrection, could be claim'd by none of all her Husbands : For though the Children of this World marry, and are given in Marriage, Luke 20. 34. 35. they, which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the

the Resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in Marriage. None of the ends for which that state was ordained, having any place there. There being no need of Procreation, and multiplying and continuing Mankind; nor of any remedy against Sin; nor of any such help and comfort, which that relation affords here.

There is no need of Procreation. *For the Children of the Resurrection cannot die any more.* And where there is no Death, there is no want of such means to repair the ruines of Mortality. Those that are to live for ever, cannot need a succession to fill their room after them, and to continue their kind. Neither is there any need of a remedy against Sin: For they are *equal unto the Angels*; perfectly free from all fleshly inclinations, having glorified Bodies, utterly incapable of those low desires. They become pure and spiritual by the Resurrection, as the Angels are by Nature. Nor is there (in the World to come) the least need of that society, help and comfort, which the relation of Marriage affords here. For they are *the Children of God*; like unto him, in a nearer and more exact resemblance, than the greatest Grace can make us here. The Children of the Resurrection shall be instated in so full and perfect Happiness and Glory, as shall render all Assistances of the dearest and most helpful Relation perfectly needless. What use can there be of such help and succour in that state, where nothing can be wanting?

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In this manner does our blessed Lord refute this idle Cavil of the Sadducees. But this is not all : For he was pleased here (as elsewhere in the holy Gospel) to take occasion, from a spiteful and captious Question, to declare and assert a great and necessary Truth ; making such a Reply, as might at once silence their Malice, and inform their Understanding. And what was deliver'd for the conviction of those Gainstayers, is equally useful for the comfort of all Believers. And accordingly the Text instructs us, in some considerable instances, what shall be the state of Holy Men at the Resurrection. Such Men being *the Children of the Resurrection* ; that is to say, partakers of it, (for so the phrase imports) such as are *accounted worthy to obtain the World to come, and the Resurrection from the Dead* ; Of these happy Persons our Lord affirms three things, as eminent parts of their Felicity and Glory.

- I. Their perfect Immortality, *They can die no more.*
- II. Their similitude to the Angels, *They are equal to them.*
- III. Their resemblance even to God himself ; *They are the Children of God.*

I. Their perfect Immortality, *They cannot die any more.* The perfection of heavenly Glory is the perpetuity of it, and the impossibility of ever losing it. Other-

Otherwise, fear of deprivation would imbitter even that ineffable state. *And the fulness of Joy which is in God's Presence*, would be defective, were not *those Pleasures [for evermore.]* But they are such, as admit no Interruption, and fear no Conclusion.

Alas! we finde here, that Life, though in the best and most desired enjoyments and satisfactions of it, has a bitter alloy from the thoughts of Death. Unprepared Men tremble at it: and even the Best and most Holy are, upon remembrance of Death, stricken into Fear and Apprehension. Nor do we dread Death only in contemplation of the Victory it must have over our Selves, but over our Friends too; the dear Companions and Pledges of our Love; the Objects of our tenderest Affection; the most kind and indulgent Husband, the most obliging and agreeable Wife, the most hopeful and promising Child, the most provident and wise Father, the most useful and faithful Friend, (*who is as our own Soul:*) These are snatcht from us by Death, and these dear enjoyments render us the wider marks for misery and for sorrow. And it cannot but shake us in our highest satisfactions, to consider how near we stand (for ought we know) to the extremest loss and disappointment.

But O how happy will that state be, wherein our Joys shall be compleat and perfect; having in them not any, the least mixture of sorrow or misery. In
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all worldly delights, either Defect, or Satiety, or Deprivation, or all of them are great and perpetual diminishings of our content ; But none of them have any place in Heaven. There our desires shall be more fully satisfied, than 'tis possible for us now to comprehend: Our capacities of pleasure shall be futable to those eternal joys ; and no possibility of ever being disturbed in those unspeakable enjoyments, or deprived of them. There we shall live in the Extasies and Raptures of glorified Communion with the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, and all the vertuous and pious Souls, in the Church Triumphant. And this without the abatements of Ignorance, Envy, or any of those passions, which molest our correspondencies here. There the *Spirits of all just men shall be made perfect.* The glorious Society shall be for ever united in dearest Love : swallowed up in the contemplation of God, and of all his wondrous benefits to the sons of men, and in returning those praises and services, which our exalted souls shall then be able to perform. And this blessed concourse shall be eternal. Every Member in that glorified Assembly being out of all possibility of defection or end. They *cannot die any more.* Death can never find entrance. The security of that Happiness shall be the Crown of it. That Life must be eternal : *οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν θανάτῳ*, 'tis not possible they should die any more.

And is it not most just and reasonable, that out

Solicitude and Labour to attain this eternal Life, should be proportionate to the dignity and excellencies of it? Who would not part with all the Honours and Advancements, with all the Riches and Possessions, with the gilded follies and vanities of this World, rather than fall short of a part in this Heavenly Kingdom? We labour and toil, endure, and comply, and do any thing, and suffer every thing, for the preservation and continuance of a mortal and perishing Life, howsoever embitter'd to us; but (Good God !) how little and how coldly are our Thoughts employ'd to make sure of everlasting Life? We direct, it may be, some faint wishes that way, now and then: The fragments of our time perhaps may be employ'd a little that way too. And 'tis possible that some publick Consternation, or some personal Fear may constrain and force in us some extraordinary applications towards Heaven for a time. But the motion is artificial only, and ceases when the weights are taken off. Then we return to our former indifferency, and all the negligences of delay. We conclude it time enough to think of another World, when we have served our turns in this. Religion is a fit employment for melancholy Old-age; when the Blood grows chill and languid, the Face wrinkled, when the Appetites to Pleasure and Folly forsake us, when we come to the Staff, and to the Couch, and grow burdensome

to our selves, and to others; when these evil Days are come, Devotion may be a proper entertainment. Till then, 'tis but a tormenting us before our time, an imposing upon the pleasure and gaiety of Life.

But certainly a Man must have very mean and vile thoughts of Eternal Life, that does not esteem it worthy of more early and vigorous endeavours to gain it: but would embrace it only (when he sees he must depart from hence) as an expedient to save him from Eternal Miseries. That Man alone is likely to attain the Joys above, who seeks first the Kingdom of God, who makes it the great design and pursuit of his whole Life, and who contains all inferior things in their due distance and subordination. Let us therefore be persuaded to call in all our stragling Affections, and fix and employ all the powers of our Souls to the gaining this happy state of Immortality; where we shall find all our labours and pains, our self-denials and sufferings abundantly recompenced. For there we shall have Knowledge without Mistake: Possessions without fading: Riches without care or loss: Honour without Envy. There shall be no Sufferings, nor no Sins: No more striving between the Flesh and Spirit: Our Souls shall never desire to have more, nor fear to have less: There we shall enjoy all that our Hearts can wish, and never grow weary of our wishes. There we shall possess all that we desire: and still desire the very things we possess. In a word,

we shall be ravish'd in the beholding God, satisfy'd in the enjoying him, and all this without fear of losing him. We shall dwell with the Eternal God in Life Eternal.

II. The Children of the Resurrection have a similitude to the blessed Angels. *They are equal unto the Angels.* Not in all points. Different Natures must have different Proprieties. But if the Angels have advantage in some Instances, we shall have it in others. And particularly in the endearment of Redemption. They reverence Jesus Christ as God: we, as a Saviour also. They adore, we love him. His Glory affects them, his Mercy us. They desire to look into that Mystery, which we enjoy. Our fruition is their great Contemplation. Their employment here (in part) is to *minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation*: and in Heaven, our Salvation fills them with wonder and extasy. Lord, what is Man, that thou art so mindful of him! A poor miserable sinful Wretch, that thou shouldst so regard him! But so shall it be with the Man, whom the King of Heaven delighteth to Honour. Oh the wonders of Divine Love! The miracles of Redemption! Dust and Ashes, like unto the Angels. Like unto them in Glory: In fitness to serve God, and in capacity of enjoying him.

Heb. i. last

1. Like unto the Angels in Glory. And what their Glory is, and what ours shall be, when we are made

made like unto them, is impossible to be described any further, than the holy Scriptures do afford us some intimations of it. The Gospel (*Mat. 28. 3.*) represents the Angels appearance at the Sepulchre in terms more suited to our comprehensions, than to his Glory: Yet 'tis said, *His Countenance was like Lightning, and his Rayment white as Snow*: A glorious and amazing Lustre did encompass him: which made the Guards shake, and become as dead Men. But as great as it was, this was still a Glory restrain'd, such as the Eyes of Men might endure to look upon. For this Angel spake to the holy Women, who thereupon departed with fear and with great joy. Their fear was not so great at his Presence, as to extinguish their joy at his Message. But when the Angels Glory is without check and limitation, in the full splendor of Heavenly Attendance: then certainly 'tis beyond expression. Such shall be the Glory of the Children of the Resurrection. *It is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory*, says St. Paul. And thus *Mat. 13. 43.* Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. And St. Paul again, *Phil. 3. 21.* The Lord Jesus shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his Glorious Body. All manner of imperfection shall be excluded, and such a Glory shall succeed it, as may render us fit Inhabitants for Heaven, and partakers of the Bliss of it. But 'tis not for us as yet to comprehend it: For it is does not yet appear what we shall be.

2. The *1 Joh. 3. 2*

2. The Children of the Resurrection shall be like unto the Angels, in fitness to serve God. Whilst we are here in the Flesh, the Soul is disadvantageously lodg'd. Corruption within, and Temptation without are great Impediments, so that we cannot attend to the Service of God without troublesome distractions. When our Devotion is at the highest, it suffers exceedingly from our Ignorance and Frailty. The Spirit is held down by the Flesh; and we are so loaded with the impediments of Nature, that we difficultly attain any tollerable elevation of Soul, and more difficultly preserve it. But in Heaven we shall be deliver'd from all Infirmities of the Flesh, and serve and glorifie our God, as Angels do: with understanding, readiness, vigour, speed, unity, and all other perfections of Obedience. The *Woman of Tekoah*, when she would celebrate the Wisdom of David, went as high as she could in her Comparison: *My Lord is Wise* (saith she) *according to the Wisdom of an Angel of God.* The Psalmist says of Angels, that *They excel in strength, and do his Commandments, hearkning unto the voice of his Word,* Psal. 103. 20. Divers other Excellencies does the holy Scripture ascribe unto these Heavenly Ministers; which nevertheless do not give them greater Abilities to do service to God, than we shall enjoy in a glorifi'd Estate. And O how happy will that Condition be, when separated from all Lusts and Passions, all Sin and Imperfection,

fection, we shall be exalted to Powers and Abilities of serving the Divine Majesty, as his mighty Angels do! Here our Praises and Adorations are faint and cold: There they shall be offer'd in all the Raptures of a glorified Soul. Here with infinite Toil we gain a defective Knowledg: There we shall have it in full measure. All the secrets of Providence and of Nature (so far at least as that Knowledg is worthy of that place) shall be manifested to our understanding. Here we perform our Duties in a poor scanty fashion, striving perpetually with the indispositions and reluctancies of Nature: There we shall readily and perfectly obey the Will of God. Those little Sparks of Divine Fire, which sometimes have toucht our Souls, in the exercises of Devotion, shall then rise to a mighty flame. The enlarged Soul will then pay a Service, suitable to the God it adores, and to the Presence and Society in which it abides: Angels and Saints joyning in full Chore to sing Praises to the Eternal God for evermore. United Love, perfect Service, and unspeakable Joy shall be for ever in that *New Jerusalem*. And none of those unhappy Distinctions, Separations, and uncharitable Divisions that wound and deform our Communion here, shall have any room in that blessed Assembly. But an universal consent shall be for ever amongst the Members of that glorious Society; all uniting in the most joyful Adorations of the Deity. And as
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as we shall then be like unto the Angels, in our fitness to serve God; so

3. In our Capacities to enjoy him. *Now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face, 1 Cor. 13. 12.* 'Tis but a Glimps here, a full Manifestation in Heaven. In this World the Imbecillity of Nature cannot sustain any great discovery of God. Hereafter we shall be made capable of the beatific Vision: We shall see God, and see him as he is: Not as now, under the vail of a Similitude; (for all that we know of him here, is taught us by resemblances) but we shall receive clear apprehensions of him. We shall then have a distinct knowledg of that Wisdom, Power and Goodness, which God has made appear so eminently in all his Works. In short, all that the Angels do enjoy of God shall be vouchsafed to us also; a full participation of supreme Felicity.

If at our return from the public Service of God at Church; if after the Sacrament devoutly received, if after the fervent performance of the duties of our Closet, we have found a warmth in our Hearts, our Souls strangely delighted and raised to an unusual degree of Satisfaction; if the Crums, that fall from the Table do afford us so great a delight, what shall we feel, when we come to *sit down in the Kingdom of God*, at the Heavenly Feast of everlasting Joys and Pleasures? It was one of St. Augustine's three Wishes, to have seen Jesus Christ in the Flesh: This would have been

been in the humility and abasement of His Incarnation. What must it be to behold him in all the Glories of his Kingdom? And to enjoy him there, to adore him as God, to love him as a Redeemer; to be united to him the Head of all the Members in the Church Triumphant? Certainly, in that state, where the Soul shall be exalted to her utmost possibilities, one of its greatest entertainments will be the clear discerning and full comprehension of the Love of the Blessed *Jesus*, in doing and suffering so much for us Men, and for our Salvation. And this will fill us with such ardency of Love to him, as shall transport us with unexpressible Joy and Pleasure. And what can we imagin more conducing to full and perfect Blessedness, than to understand the wonderful Mysteries of Divine Love, and to be able to make our returns of Love in so high and noble proportion. If the Transfiguration did so ravish Saint *Peter*, as to make him cry out, Master, it is good being here; what must it be, when our Capacities shall be enlarg'd so, as to receive and enjoy the full Tide, the mighty Torrent of Divine Majesty and Glory?

It is no wonder (since every common thing baffles the largest Understanding) that here, we have such poor and narrow conceptions of God. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection?* says *Zophar*, Job 11. 7. Should God discover himself to us in any measure

suitable to his infinite Perfection, the Manifestation would oppress and confound us. Our greatest, natural Powers could not bear such a Revelation. But at the Resurrection we shall be like unto the Angels, endow'd with such vast extent of Capacity, as may fit us to entertain those discoveries of the eternal Trinity, which shall be the inconceivable fruition of the state of Immortality. And this may suffice to shew (though in a very imperfect manner) the Similitude, which the Children of the Resurrection have unto the Angels.

III. There remains another instance of their Glory in that happy Condition, namely, their resemblance even to God himself, which is delivered in these terms, *They are the Children of God*. There is no remainder of those frail and perishing Principles in them, which they derived from their Earthly Parents.

It is usual in the Scriptures of the New Testament to style them, who by Faith and Repentance are born again, the Children of God. Thus Saint Paul, Gal. 3. 26. *Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*. And this Relation creates in us a likeness to our Heavenly Father: Our Souls carry resembling Lineaments. It makes us *holy, as He is holy*. But certainly our Saviour (in the Text) intended more, when he makes it a principal part of Heavenly Bliss, that we are then *the Children of God*. We shall then

then be more eminently ; more resemblingly so. If Grace render us like him here, Glory shall much more there. His Image in us shall be infinitely more express, our likeness to him more exact. For every thing, which in this Life gives us a resemblance to God, shall then be raised to Perfection ; we shall then attain unto *subness of Stature*. And these imperfect Lines, and first Draughts upon the Soul, shall be fill'd up and finish't, in that blessed state of Immortality. But in what instances, and in what manner this shall be, is not for me to describe. For S. John himself leaves it to future Manifestation. 1 Joh. 3. 2. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* For the present, most sure it is, that we are the Sons of God : But how much more perfectly we shall be so at the Resurrection, is not revealed as yet. Only in general, we shall be like unto God : otherwise it would be impossible for us to sustain the beatific Vision, to see him as he is, or to enjoy that Blessedness which he will then impart to us. But no words are significant enough to give any tollerable account of this happy Future State ; which is as unknown to us, as the offices and entertainments of Life are to the Child in the Womb, till our Powers and Capacities are come to their perfection. And thus I have endeavoured to explain the Instances, which the Text

gives of the Glory we shall obtain in the Resurrection. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God.

The Consideration whereof does certainly afford us the most powerful and effectual Consolation, amidst all the Miseries of Humane Life. For we can suffer nothing here, that can bear the lowest proportion to the Retributions of another World, when we shall become Immortal, Angelical, and even the Children of God in Glory. This was St. Paul's Collection, Rom. 8. 16, 17, 18. *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joynt-heirs with Christ: If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.* This Apostle's determination, though exprest in general terms, holds true in all particulars. For example: We want Health it may be: our Bodies are full of Pains and Languishment: our Days are uneasy; and our Nights restless; the most orderly Regiment of our selves, and all the aids of the Physician, can scarce preserve us in that sickly life we enjoy. But here is our Comfort, that in the Resurrection we shall be freed from these tormenting Sorrows: *This Mortal shall put on Immortality.* And though in this Tabernacle of the Body, we do groan, being burden'd

den'd with various and disquieting Maladies, yet the time is coming, when *Mortality shall be swallowed up of Life*, 2 Cor. 5. 4. Perhaps we are reduced to Poverty, and put to suffer the difficult Incumbrances of a needy condition : In which (as is usual) many of our Friends forsake us ; and we have the additional sorrow of finding our selves Despised and become Ridiculous. But still let us support our selves with the meditation of Heavenly Treasures laid up for us. So did those Ancient Christians, *Heb. 10. 34. They took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance: exempted from Moth and Rust, and from Thieves; from Decay and from Violence.* Our lot perchance is to undergo the outrages of Persecution, branded with Characters of Infamy : *Made as the Filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all things*, and used accordingly. But all this is abundantly recompensed in this Consideration, that in the Resurrection we shall be owned and avouched as the Children of God. Whereupon our Lord himself exhorts us thus, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 12. Death, it may be, makes breaches upon us, in our Families, or Friends. First one falls, and then another ; and scarce have we gotten over the Grief of one Funeral, but a second calls us to the same sad Offices. And these alarms of Mortality, put us in-

1 Cor. 4.
13.

to expectations of our own Dissolution. These are black and melancholic Contemplations, till we be-think our selves that in the other World, they and we cannot die any more ; and though we undergo a short separation, we shall meet again at the Resurrection, and enjoy a Heavenly Reunion, which shall never be interrupted, or embitter'd, much less dissolved. It is no doubt an unreasonable Imposition upon the gentleness of Humane Nature, to forbid those tender expressions of Sorrow which are common over the Hearses of our Relations and Friends. But 'tis withal a mighty alleviation of our Grief, when we have good reason to believe they died in the Favour and Love of God: That the Angels attended and conducted their departed Souls to their heavenly Rest ; that they are now out of the danger of Temptation, and having finish'd their Course, are gone to receive the Crown. Methinks in the midst of our Lamentations, we should not forbear even to rejoyce, and gratulate the happiness of those dear Souls, who are possess'd of that, which above all other things we most passionately desired they might attain.

In a word : When we have survey'd all the Afflictions and Troubles, which in this frail and mortal Life we are subject to, though 'tis impossible to hinder their having some troublesome impressions upon our Spirits, yet there are such infinite Comforts to be derived

derived from the consideration of the future state of the Blessed, as are sufficient to enable us not only to endure, but to *glory in Tribulations*: as knowing that thereby Grace is promoted, and our Glory enhanced. Rom. 5. 3.
 All the Sufferings which the most Afflicted Man can undergo in this Life, are not to be mention'd in comparison with the Joys and Glories of the Life to come; which St. Paul has express'd in words of strange *emphasis* and signification: 2 Cor. 4. 17.
For our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory.

But these things cannot be understood till they are enjoyed. Even this Excellent Lady (whose Funerals have given occasion to this Discourse) in her highest, and most ravishing Meditations of Heaven, could but conjecture only, and that very imperfectly, what God hath prepared for her, and for all those that love him. But she understood and felt so much, as served to engage and animate her in all the Exercises of holy Living. And she never thought those Conditions hard, which God requires to *make* Col. 1. 12.
us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. And this I shall endeavour to make appear in the following accounts of her; which I have collected from the happy opportunities I have had for many Years, to make observation of her holy Life, and from some Memorials, which those who best
 knew.

Lib. 3.
Epist. 21.

knew her, have communicated to me. And if any can be so invidious, as to think the Character I shall give, can exceed the Subject, I shall say nothing, but that of the admirable Pliny: *That those that neglect the doing Praise-worthy things, look upon all Commendation to Flattery.* Nor shall I fear any Misconstructions, it being an excellent service to Vertue and Piety, when those Persons who have been the greatest Examples of it, are commended to Imitation. For an Hundred Sermons and Advices of Religion are not so persuasive, as a single Example, especially so Illustrious an one, as this most incomparable Person was.

She was Born within few miles of this Place, being the Fifth Daughter of her great and Vertuous Parents, of whose Blood and Descent, it is not my design to give any Account. Nor can it be needful to any, that have the least acquaintance with the History or Heraldry of the Kingdom. She was educated under the Care, Precepts, and Examples of her Excellent Mother: And her great and capacious Soul received and improved those happy Advantages to such a Degree, that (besides other Qualifications proper to a Person of her Age, Sex, and Quality) she had very early attained to great measures of Prudence, and of grave and wise Conduct; and (in the Prophets words) *The Child was an Hundred Years old.* And this was no defect of Wit or Spirit. Her com-

Isa. 65. 20.

composedness of Mind proceeded not from Phlegm: Nor was Dulness excused and concealed under the name of Gravity. She understood well, and (in its proper season) could entertain her self and others with all the innocent Ingenuities, and sprightliness of Conversation. But her great Soul aspired to more suitable Entertainments, to things Solid, Improving, and Rational. She had then so little of the Levity, Heats, and Indiscretions common in that time of Life, that she became Example to her Sex, even in her very young Years; and had thereby the mighty advantages of setting out at first in a right Course, gaining habits of Vertue, and exalting her Mind with the noblest Images and Rules of it.

To the gaining these Attainments, she had the assistance of a quick and sharp Understanding, and deep Apprehension, with a Judgment so discerning, as happily determined her the right Way, when she was at any time to conclude what was True or False, Good or Evil. For having submitted her innocent and unprejudiced Soul to the conduct of Vertue, and continually begging of Almighty God the Illumination and Guidance of the Holy Spirit; she was by this means preserved from those Errors, into which Pride and Confidence have seduced many others. Nor was it an inconsiderable Safeguard, that she always had upon her Spirit so great a sense of Honour. By which I mean not any immoderate remembrance

of her noble Extraction, nor any insolent or haughty Behaviour towards others (for none could be more Humble and Obliging); but I mean a continual regard to things naturally Great and Honourable, a Circumspection to avoid all that is base and vile, and unsuitable to the dignity of Nature, and the principles of Vertue, and to that condition of Men from whom the Laws and Rules of Demeanour are expected.

Her Passions and Affections (as is usual in the most elevated Souls) were great and quick: but under such admirable restraint and command, that one would have thought it had been Constitution in her, and not Discipline: And that she had been the Mistress of her Passions by the benevolence of Nature, and not by Care and Labour. But this latter was manifest. For she was far from being insensible: And as she understood as well as any, all the Offices of Friendship; so would her generous Mind resent them. She had none of that Meanness in her, to study Diminutions of any Act of Kindness, or to suspect a Design in it; but magnify'd it to others, and to her self too. She readily supposed every thing that could greaten the Testimonies of Friendship to her; and her Recompences always bore proportion to this Generosity. She was always jealous her Returns had not been sufficient, and that she had come short of the just performances of a Friend.

But

But in case of any neglect or failure towards her, of any unkindness or disservice (in what measure soever she might apprehend it) all her Resentments were sealed up. Not that she kept any black Registers of Injuries, or Memento's against an opportunity of Retaliation : But she consider'd all that could lessen the Offence, and where it could not be defended, she made sure to forgive it. And if any express'd a concernment that she was Injured, she labour'd to appease them, by alleging all imaginable Excuses and Extenuations of the Offender's Fault: Not esteeming any interest of her own worthy the passion of a Friend's Vindication.

She bore so perfect a hatred to all Vice and Immorality, that the least approaches towards it in any Person, received from her the reprehension of a Blush, or a Frown, or (if she judg'd it expedient) a more direct and open Confutation. But she had few occasions to exercise this part of her Vertue : For her presence was awful ; and 'tis a Torment to vain and extravagant Persons, to be under the Limitation and Confinement which Vertuous Company puts upon them. It is possible nevertheless, that in many Persons far inferiour to her in Goodness, some actions and behaviours of a resembling Nature may be observed. But then they are commonly but the Ostentations of a counterfeit Vertue ; little devices and ambushes to get Fame and Commendation.

In her they were grown to Custom : So Habitual and Familiar, that she never expected any Observation ought to be made of them.

To all these Qualities of a cultivated and enlarg'd Mind, excellent Understanding, and a commanding Reason, she superadded a Holy, Pure, and even Angelical Life. To know God, and to be like him, was her first and great Endeavour. She lived always in prospect of Heaven, and thither did her Devout Spirit evermore aspire. This made those Temptations, which prevail so fatally upon others, prove only Molestations to her. This World (as it was to *Monica*, discoursing of Heaven with her holy Son) was vile and dispicable in her Eye, whose Contemplations and Longings, were directed to things Eternal. She wisely concluded, that a meek and quiet Spirit, a true Devotion and severe Vertue, were more excellent Acquisitions, and more lovely Ornaments, than any of the gaudy Vanities, where-with vulgar and narrow Souls are so unreasonably transported. Nor did she only approve the things that are Excellent, but she practised them also, to such a Degree, that in her, Primitive Christianity was revived; and she lived as those first Christians did, and as we should. And this (by the Grace of God) preserved her from those low conceptions of Religion, which many have taken up: Who would make it to consist in the little badges and cognizances

nizances of a Party; in angry Disputings, and foolish Wranglings; in bringing all things into Question, and projecting eternal amendments in Spiritual Affairs; in zealous contending about Words and Names, &c. Talk and Pretence she never esteem'd worthy her Consideration; and was not to be impos'd upon by the sleights and ostentation of the Factors for other Churches. But having upon Principles of Judgment and Conviction, fully satisfy'd her self, she conscientiously and devoutly adhered to the Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline of the Church of *England*. And though (like *Mary* in the Gospel) she had thus *chosen the better part*, making Religion her great Business and Employment, yet she was sensibly offended when she found it taken notice of, unless it were by Imitation. Her design being to provoke others to good Works, not to flattering Attributions. Not that she was ashamed of being thought Religious, but she dreaded the Hypocrisy of a designed Publication that she was so.

And as a further Evidence that she studied the Power of Godliness, not the Form of it, she labour'd most in the retired intimacies of true Religion. This appear'd in the constant frequency of her private Devotions, which she perform'd three times a Day at the least: Using to that purpose the most private Concealments, not only to avoid Disturbance

ance, but (what she more shun'd) Discovery. And to assist, enlarge, and enforce her Devotions, she added to them frequent Fasts. Wherein she held her self to our Saviour's Rule, *Mat. 6. 16. When ye Fast, be not as the Hypocrites, of a sad Countenance: For they disfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to Fast. But when thou fastest, anoint thy Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to Fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Thus upon such occasions, she would seem to eat, and to take her usual Repast, that she might escape Observation: Nor would any thing more discompose her, than an inquisition into her Abstinence.

To her Prayers and Fasting, she added (as a necessary Concomitant) Alms to the Poor, in dispensing whereof she was extremely Kind and Bountiful, and was somewhat severe to her self oftentimes, that she might be the more Charitable to them that were in Need. And her Liberality in this kind was always accompanied with such a condescending and obliging Compassion, as render'd her Reliefs of the Distressed doubly comforting to them. But in these Pious Distributions she used such means of secrecy, that no more particular accounts can be given, than such as can be gathered from those Persons, who to manifest their Gratitude, have made trespass upon their promises of Concealment.

To

To sustain and nourish this constant course of Piety and Devotion, she drew daily Succours from the Holy Scriptures, beginning and concluding every Day with some Portion of them. And this not as a Task, and to maintain a Custom, but as a peculiar Delight, and the most agreeable entertainment of her Mind. Which appeared in her Youthful time, when about Twenty Years since, she resided here in this Town, the Bell at Four in the Morning (even in the Winter Season) was her certain Summons to her Devotions, which were seconded by diligent Reading and Meditating upon the holy Word of God. Wherein she assisted her self, not only by Public Sermons, but by the best and soundest Expositors, which our Church affords. And all this, not to give her self a mere intellectual Improvement and Satisfaction. But she suffer'd the Divine Law to pass into Government : It ruled and commanded her in all her Actions ; and she adorned the Doctrine of God our Saviour, by a suitable Conversation.

But it is not to be omitted, that the principal of all her Joys, was the blessed Sacrament. Her devout Soul finding the most satisfying refreshments in the Spiritual Feast of the most precious Body and Blood of her Saviour ; which made her most earnestly embrace every Opportunity she could lay hold on to partake of that holy Mystery. Accordingly she Communicated once every Month, since her

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Residence in *London*; fitting her self before-hand with all possible preparations due to the Dignity of that Divine Celebration. And herein she exercised such Acts of Devotion, and Religious Austerity to her self, as if it had been the last Act of her Life: And that she were to pass from the Altar to the Tribunal, from the Table of our Lord to his Judgment-Seat. Neither was this with the neglect of other Duties. For she loved to draw nigh to God, in all the Ways of approaching him. She attended the Church upon all Occasions, with a zeal like that of holy *Anna*, who departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fastings and Prayers Night and Day. And so much was her Mind fixed upon the Offices of Religion, that as soon as ever she could obtain Release from Business, or from Company, she took up some work of Devotion, and return'd to those Spiritual Fruitions, with new Appetites and impatient Desires.

Luk. 3. 27.

Yet did not all this Retirement, and the Devotional Employments of it, contract any moroseness of Humour in her. Herein she also imitated her Saviour: Who though He spent whole Nights in Prayer, and lived as became the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the World; yet was pleased to Converse with infinite Benignity and Condescension, even to the meanest People. For her Religion was of such a Complexion, that she never lookt upon rigid Sowness, and censorious Austerity, to be any Orna-

Ornament to it. The Holy Spirit (she well knew) produces Fruits of another kind: Namely, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, &c.* Gal. 5. 22. Which Fruits, all that had the happiness to know her, will acknowledg were eminently visible in her Life and Actions.

Thus perpetually exercising upon her self so wise and holy a Discipline, she arrived to so noble an elevation of Mind, that the assaults of Passion could not move her. For certainly none ever had a greater evenness of Mind, and calmness of Spirit, in all Events. Some occasions she met with, that put to trial her Patience and Contentment: But in her they produced no visible alteration. She still preserved her wonted constancy and serenity of Soul. Not that she was Insensible, but she was Content. Her Philosophy was not Stoical, but Christian; it was not Apathy, but Resignation.

In short: So uniform was she in the practice of all Christian Vertue, that she adorned and illustrated every Relation wherein she stood. A Friend she was even to Supererogation, beyond what could be expected, or without Reluctancy (sometimes) admitted. A most dutiful Daughter even to the highest Degree and Example. A Wife precisely observant, from the smallest things to the greatest, provident and careful in all the Concernments of her worthy Husband; studying and contriving his Interests and Satisfaction

in every thing. She was such a Wife, in whom the Heart of her Husband did safely trust: in whom he had all joy and delight. To which he made the most affectionate returns of Kindness, Love, and tenderest Care. All which are now redoubled upon her little Daughter, the only pledg of their Conjugal Affection.

For so it pleased Almighty God to order it, That in the midst of this Excellent Ladie's preparation for Communicating at the Lord's Table, she was seized with that Disease, which soon after became Mortal to her. On the next Lord's-Day in the Morning, she thought her self in condition to leave her Bed, and pay her Devotions at Church, and to partake of the holy Sacrament, that Day to be administred. But those vigorous longings of her Soul, made her judge too well of the state of her Body. For her strength soon fail'd her: and they that attended her, found it necessary to continue her in all the accommodations of a Sick Person. And she her self also was (by this time) so far convinced of the weak condition of her Body, that she concluded her End was near; and thenceforth dismiss'd all Worldly Thoughts and Cares, and every thing that might give Impediment to her in her preparations for another World. Then it was (when she had before her the mighty prospect of Eternity) that she severely Arraign'd and Judg'd her self: examining her Life past with the strictest and most accurate scrutiny. What past between God and her

her own Soul, we cannot pretend to know. But she discover'd a trouble, not without bemoaning her self, That she had not improved her time as she ought to have done. If one that liv'd such a holy and severe Life makes such complaints, Good God! what accounts will those Persons make, whose time is their burden, who call in Pleasures, Vanity, Folly, and Vice, to drive it away.

One thing more did (it seems) touch her Thoughts, which was this, That she had set her Heart too much upon her little Child: So jealous was she, lest a just Natural Affection should grow so immoderate, as to become Criminal, and her Love to God suffer any abatements by her kindness to an only Child. Self-accusations of this sort were indications of a very tender Conscience, and of a very innocent Soul. Happy Saint! That upon her Death-bed had no greater matter against her self. Who would not purchase such Peace as she then felt, at any rate whatsoever? Her acquaintance with God, and her interest in Him, were not then to be made: That had been her early Care, and daily Business. Her Life came under continual reviews; and she *judg'd her self*, to prevent God's judging her. Her account was always in a readiness to be deliver'd up: And her hopes of Heaven were so fixt and ravishing, that the World could not tempt, nor Death affright her; but she entertain'd her Dissolution as her Privilege, and
(*being*

(*being Righteous*) *she had hope in her Death, Prov.*
 14. 32.

Nor was any thing of this to be ascribed to her Distemper. Sickness, 'tis true, does often stupify the Mind: and the oppression of the Spirits may be sometimes mistaken for an undisturbed and unsettled Soul. But in her 'twas manifestly the assurance of Faith, and Christian confidence in the Merits and Intercession of her dear Lord and Saviour. For God continu'd to her in all the time of her Sickness, the great mercy of a clear Understanding, and perfect Sense and Memory to the last: Which she most piously made use of in humble Resignations, devout Prayers, heavenly Meditations, holy Discourses, and Advices, and in all suitable entertainments of a departing Soul.

At last, Without Agonies, or any great Pains, without frightful Accidents, without Fears and Horrors, without the disturbance of Temptations: But in a sweet Calm of Conscience, in stedfast Faith, and perfect Charity, in joyful expectation of Eternal Life, she quietly gave up her Soul into the Hands of her most Merciful Redeemer.

Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excellent Person, in peace with God, in Communion with his Church, in Charity with all the World; leaving the Memorial and Example of her holy Life, to the Imitation of all that desire to excel in Virtue. And though we mourn and lament her Death, let it not be, without the consolation of this Remembrance, that *She cannot die any more, but is equal with the Angels, and is a Child of God, being one of the Children of the Resurrection.*

F I N I S.

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